

Field-Carpenter House
Old Bedford Road
North Greenwich
Fairfield County
Connecticut

HABS No. CT-352

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CONN,
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FIELD-CARPENTER HOUSE

HABS No. CT-352

Location: Old Bedford Road, North Greenwich, Fairfield County,
Connecticut.

Present Owner: Estate of Evelyn Carpenter, et al.

Significance: This residential dwelling is an early 18th century
one-and-a-half story farmhouse built in the Dutch
tradition. It has been altered and added to accommodate
succeeding generations in the prevailing style of the
particular time.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Early 18th century.
 2. Architect: Not known.
 3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a record of
property transactions for the Field-Carpenter House. The
information is from the Town of Greenwich, Land Records and
Probate Court Records, Greenwich, Connecticut.
- 1722/23 The property on which the Field-Carpenter House stands was
contained in the land purchased by (Capt.) Joshua Cornwell
then of Cow Neck, Hempstead, Long Island, through grant from
Richard Ogden and Deed from Samuel Mills (Land Records,
Greenwich, Book 2, p. 373).
- 1728 Capt. Joshua Cornwell (1677-) transferred by Deed
property to his son Joshua Cornwell, Jr. (Land Record Book 3,
p. 561).
- 1759 Joshua Cornwell (1696-1758) bequeathed his homestead and
property to his youngest son John Cornwell (1738-1813)
reserving one third part for his wife Charity during her
widowhood. She died in 1776. The property description:
"...on the west side of Biram River joyning on said
river...containing about 150 acre ... more or less..."
(Probate Stamford Court Will Book 5, p. 36). Inventory L
562-10-0.
- 1813 The will of John Cornell (no longer Cornwell) dated "first
day of the ninth month eighteen hundred and eight" directed
that all his estate, real and personal be sold at his
decease, except for certain bequests for his wife as her

right of dower in marriage agreement dated 1796. (Probate
Will Book 11, p. 11 Stamford)

Total bequests	\$ 14, 675.00
Inventory taken by Thomas Carpenter and James Field, second day eighth month 1813.	
Farm valued at	\$ 9,000.00
Miscellaneous items	<u>2,291.00</u>
	\$11,291.00

On December 18, 1813 the John Cornell Farm was sold by
the Executors Thomas Clapp, John Griffin and Josiah
Field for \$12,016.00

to John Haviland, Rye, Westchester County, State of
New York...two tracts of land...one contained fifty
three acres...bounded north by lands of James Field,
north east by Byram River, east and south by the
highway, and west by land of James Field, the second
contained 134 acres bounded northerly by the highway,
easterly beginning at the highway by the bridge,
then running southerly by the bounds of the mill pond
and the Byram River to Thomas Clapp land, south by
land of Thomas Clapp, west by land in part of Uriah
Field and in part by land of Thomas Clapp with the
Buildings thereon (Land Record, Book 18, p. 124)

John Haviland conveyed by Warrantee Deed to:

Thomas Carpenter.... forty one acres
James Field ... thirty eight acres
Elisha Belcher ... one contained one
hundred one acres and second contained
sixteen acres. (Land Record, Book 18,
p. 123,125,126)

- 1813 Survey Map of John Cornwell's Farm, late of Greenwich run in
several pieces at the request of James Field 10th of December
1813 by Amos Canfield, Surveyor.
- 1817 Elisha Belcher, of the West Society of the Town of Greenwich,
sold to James Field the two pieces he had purchased from John
Haviland in 1813 ..." ... with the buildings thereon ... first
piece where I now live containing 101 acres and the second
piece 16 acres ..." Nov. 4, 1817 (Land Records Book 19, p.
133).
- 1819 James Field to Calvin Mead "the privilege of building a Dam on
Byram River at Pine Hill so-called..." In exchange, Calvin
Mead granted to James Field similar privileges "at the little
falls so-called at the great rocks." (Land Record Book 19, p.
498).

- 1844 James Field sold to his son Edmund Field for the consideration of.... \$500.00 "three certain pieces of land lying in said town of Greenwich containing about one hundred and fifteen acres they are bounded East and North by byram river south by land of Allen Sutton West by land of Richard B. Carpenter and my own land being divided by the new road and the road leading from Richard B. Carpenter to said new Road." The "new road" is Old Bedford Road on which the house stands. (Recorded Feb. 22, 1844 Land Record Book 26, p. 76).
- 1865 - An agreement between Alfred Williams and Edmund Field: Alfred
1868 Williams to lease the land on the "Cornell Farm"... " ... and to keep not less than 8 head of cattle on the farm which is occupied by me and to not plough up any more sod or grass ground than the field known as the pond lot. The wheat on the field by the Barn being reserved by Edmund Field."
- 1890 Edmund Field (1814-1890) died apparently without a will in the Town of Harrison, County of Westchester State of New York. His sole heir was his only child Hannah Lydia (Field) Carpenter (1842 - 1922), wife of Francis W. Carpenter (1845-1925) (Westchester County Surrogate Court April 22, 1890 File 172).
- 1891 Francis W. Carpenter, husband of Hannah, Administrator for the Estate of Edmund Field, listed property in an inventory filed on July 27, 1891 at Probate Court, Town of Greenwich. "One tract 115 acres bounded east and north by Byram River, South by land of Allen Sutton, West by land of Richard B. Carpenter and land of James Field and buildings, including a right to dam Byram River -
\$ 17,000.00."
- 1928 Mary L. Carpenter, Evelyn A. Carpenter, Grace G. Carpenter and Alice L. C. Warner received by Quit Claim 10.523 acres with buildings thereon, daughters of Hannah Lydia (Field) Carpenter and Francis W. Carpenter. (Land Records, Greenwich Book 263, p. 215).
- 1966 Survey Map - Property of Evelyn Carpenter, et al, Greenwich, Connecticut. S. E. Minor & Co. Civil Engineers 4.075 acres. July 11, 1966.
- 1971 Estate of Evelyn Carpenter, et al. Property contains 4.07 acres more or less and is situated on the easterly side of Bedford Road in the Town of Greenwich, County of Fairfield, State of Connecticut bounded and described as follows: northerly by land of Carl and Catherine Peterson; southerly and easterly by land of Henry C. Scarlett and westerly on Bedford Road. Grand List Real Estate, Town of Greenwich.

Note: The acreage surrounding the house was sold in varying parcels. Approximately forty acres to the east along the Byram River is now part of the National Audubon Society tract and the Nature Conservancy tract.

4. Original plans and construction: Original 1-1/2 story lean-to house consists of a parlor and two small rooms. Addition to the east created another parlor and two small rooms. The kitchen (present dining room) was added in the late 18th century, east of the main house. The present kitchen was added in the early 19th century to the east of the chimney of an earlier kitchen. A stone enclosed room north of the 18th century kitchen (present dining room) was built at same the time as the 18th century kitchen. Entire building is of frame construction- posts and connecting beams typical of Dutch methods.
5. Alterations and additions: The porch across the first floor front elevation is a ca. 1800 addition. During the construction of the present kitchen, the fireplace was shifted from the old kitchen wing to the opposite side in the "new" kitchen. Three dormers were added in the south roof slope to accommodate 19th century bedrooms. Original attic storage of the main house was converted into bedrooms in the 19th century. In the mid-19th century the chimney in the east and west parlors was altered to accommodate new stoves. Shed dormers were added in the north and south roof slopes in the early 20th century. Also at the same time the kitchen wing was raised to full two stories.

- B. Historical Context: One of the earliest still standing in Greenwich, the house has been continuously owned by members of the Friends Religious Society from the time of Joshua Cornwell, Jr. (1696-1758) except for a brief span from 1813 to 1817. Then Elisha Belcher, a prominent member of the Congregational West Society, owned and occupied it. He was surrounded by the Quaker neighbors, possessors of more than a thousand acres to the west of the Byram River in Connecticut. Among them was James Field, the succeeding owner. The Fields were descendants of John Bowne of Flushing, Long Island, the leader of the Quakers in New York State, and his wife Hannah who was the daughter of Elizabeth Fones Winthrop, one of the three founders of the Town of Greenwich, in 1640.

During the French and Indian War (1754-63) and later during the War of the Revolution (1775-83) the refusal of the Friends to support the war efforts and to serve in the militia brought penalties and reprisals to many. The manuscript volume "Sufferings" of the Friends records such reprisals to John Cornell and his immediate neighbors. A descendant tells that when John Cornell refused the demands of a band of men, whose identity is yet obscure, he was removed bodily from his house and hanged from a tree. When they departed his wife sped into the orchard, cut the rope; John lived to the age of 75 years.

In 1776, the Friends, always earnest opponents of slavery, were urged to free all of their slaves. The last record of slave ownership in the Cornell family appeared in Joshua's will dated 1758. Of the total number of 60 slaves recorded in the Census of 1790 for the Town of Greenwich, none were recorded for the Friends.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The house's overall appearance is simple. It has common double-hung sash windows, gable roofs, a porch, and a lean-to. In the interior, the dining room was formerly a 18th century kitchen, and the 18th century portion has east and west parlors.
2. Condition of fabric: Much of the main house is in good condition. Lean-to area and kitchen wing are poor.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The one-and-a-half story rectangular house measures 25'-6" x 74'-9".
2. Foundations: Fieldstone (rubble).
3. Walls: Cedar shingles (1'-8" exposure) on the south and west elevations (round butt shingles on wall at the east parlor only). "Novelty" siding elsewhere on the first floor. All shed dormers and second floor additions are cedar shingles (6" exposure). At the present all wall surfaces are painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: Main House- Post and beam system characteristic of Dutch frame building. Woods used are red and white oak. The roof has continuous oak rafters in the north roof slope running from first floor plate at north wall to main ridge. The kitchen wing (18th century portion) has similar post and beam system. This may have been an outbuilding moved up to the main house.
5. Porch: The porch is entire length of the south elevation of the main house and was probably added about 1800. New posts have replaced mid-19th century posts. At the same time the wood floor was removed. It is believed that flagstone paving dates from the time of the construction of the porch. Rebuilt cellar entry is protected by the porch at its western end.

6. Chimneys: Main house- Chimney was rebuilt in the mid-19th century to accommodate a stove in the west and east parlors. Kitchen wing- the fireplace was shifted from the old kitchen to the opposite side for use in the "new" kitchen probably about 1830. A chimney was added when the roof was raised early 20th century.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main entrance doorway has a four-light transom window. The door is a mid-19th century four-panel door. The doorway in the dining room has a divided Dutch door. Each leaf has one panel. Northwest room (main house) has a two-panel door. It is Dutch but not divided. In the north wall of the "new" kitchen its doorway has a good example of a 18th century storm door. Other doorways have plain batten doors.
 - b. Windows: The windows in the south wall of the main house have 12/8 sash, 8" x 10" glass and 1" wide muntins. Windows elsewhere have 6/6 sash, 8" x 10" glass and 1/2" wide muntins; some are dated from the late 18th century, and others are modern replacements. Adjustable louvered shutters, formerly on the kitchen wing have been removed.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The roof on the main house and the kitchen wing has single pitch on the north and south, sloping away from a central ridge. Originally the main house had cedar shingles with 1'-4" exposure. A 19th century shingle roof replaced original shingles. At the turn of the century asbestos cement shingles (French or Hexagonal method) were applied over the old shingles. Recently, composition strip roofing has been laid on top of asbestos cement shingles.
 - b. Eaves: Eaves are simple and project far enough to prevent rain water from dripping on the side wall. All gable ends are finished with simple barge boards.
 - c. Dormers: It is believed that three or four dormers were located in the south slope of the main house. About 1900 these were replaced with a shed dormer nearly the width of the main house. A similar dormer was built on the north roof slope, no doubt, at the same time.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The cellar is under the east and west parlors only. Access to the main house is by means of an exterior entrance in the southwest corner. The interior entrance is midway in the west wall of the dining room. First floor of the main house consists of six rooms with a small entrance hall between the east and west parlors. Between the parlors is a chimney and closet for each parlor. Four rooms under the lean-to to the north of the parlors were formerly bedrooms long before the second floor was altered for bedrooms. To the east of the east parlor is the main stairway leading to the second floor. It is possible that when the east parlor was added a chimney occupied space where the stairway is now located. Kitchen wing to the east consists of a dining room (formerly 18th century kitchen) and the "new" kitchen to the east of the old one. To the north of the dining room is the cold or milk room enclosed with stone walls on the north and east. 19th century shed fills area in the north corner. Second floor of the main house has three bedrooms to the south with a hall in the center leading to a bedroom. Across the north side is an attic in the lean-to area. Kitchen wing has an attic space over the dining room and the "new" kitchen. To the north over the cold room is a bedroom built at the same time when the roof was raised over the kitchen wing early in the 20th century. An open deck was built over the shed in the northeast corner.
2. Stairways: The main stairway is a straight-run type and enclosed. It runs northward from the small hall between the west parlor and the dining room. There is a staircase in the southeast corner of the 19th century kitchen. It is obvious that this staircase was acquired and located to give access to the "improved" attic of the early 20th century. It rises to the north with the first riser against the south wall of the kitchen. Under the main staircase is a stairway to the cellar in the west wall of the dining room.
3. Flooring: The east and west parlors have white pine boards measuring 11"-13" in width. The first floor northwest room has oak boards as wide as 17-1/2". Red pine was used for flooring in a room north of the east parlor. The present dining room has oak boards. Boards in the 19th century kitchen are pine. Floors in the second story bedrooms are poplar (white wood) and measure as much as 18" in width.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceilings of all rooms are lath and plastered except for the ceiling in the dining room where beams are exposed. Superb oak floor beams over the east and west parlors were originally exposed. These beams are planed as is typical of Dutch work.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: While some 18th century door casings remain most of the doors in the major rooms date from the mid-19th century. Doors and casings as well as mantels in the east and west parlors are Greek Revival design. Along with several batten doors there are a couple of four-panel doors. Panels are bevelled. Stiles and rails are square edged. On the opposite side the edges of rails and stiles surrounding panels have a small ovolo moulding. There are a couple of two-panel doors, typical of Dutch work, made up of rails and stiles applied to two or three boards. Inner edges of rails and stiles have either a small ovolo or are beaded.
- b. Windows: (Not recorded).

6. Decorative features and trim: The windows in the south walls of the east and west parlors are unusual in that they are recessed. Similar detail may be found in the Bush Homestead, King Street, Portchester, Connecticut, not far distant. A cupboard is in the old 18th century kitchen wing.
7. Hardware: Throughout the house there are a number of wrought-iron strap hinges, several with cusps typical of Dutch work in and around New York area. One pair of hinges particularly notable are on a four-panel door in the east wall of a room in the northwest corner of the first floor. They consist of a small strap hinge swinging on a pintle which is located at the end of another strap. This strap is spiked to a vertical board wall adjoining a doorway opening.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The original part of the house is within 25' of Old Bedford Road. While the house essentially faces south it actually faces southwest since the points on the compass are on the 45° angle.
2. Historic landscape design: Near the house are very old black walnut and locust trees. At the present shrubs and vines have been allowed to grow out of control.
3. Outbuilding: A small building, approximately 15' x 18', one-and-a-half stories high, stands to the southeast of the main house about 50'. It was recently altered to serve as a garage by extending it to several feet. A storage area was added to the rear, accessible by a pair of doors. It is of braced frame construction, broad-axed in most cases.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Probate Court Records, prior to 1855. Town of Stamford, Connecticut

Land Records and Probate Court Records, after 1855. Town of Greenwich, Connecticut

Manuscripts of the Friends Religious Society. Haviland Record Room, New York City. (Specific address not indicated).

Abstract of Probate Records of Stamford, Vols. I and II, prepared by Spencer Mead, town clerk of Stamford, Connecticut

Survey map of John Cornwell's farm, 1813, surveyed by Amos Canfield. In the possession of Mrs. Dirk W. Brouwer

Survey of property of Evelyn Carpenter, et al, July 11, 1966, surveyed by S.E. Minor, civil engineer

2. Secondary and published sources:

Mead, Spencer. Ye History of Greenwich. Survey map showing township of Greenwich and parishes, surveyed in 1757 and 1773 by Charles Webb, surveyor of lands for Fairfield County, p. 67.

New York Historical Society. Erstine-DeWitt manuscript map, No. 24, Part 2.

Beers, F.W. Atlas of New York and vicinity. Map of Town of Greenwich, Connecticut, 1867.

Selchow, Roger H. Ye Olden Days Before 1875. Map of Northern Greenwich.

U.S. Government. U.S.A. Census of 1790. Available at many public libraries.

Kitchel, Allan F., Jr. The Field Home Located on Old Bedford Road. Greenwich: The Greenwich Press, 1937.

B. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Histories and manuscripts in Cow Neck Historical Society, Hempstead, Long Island, New York.

Manuscripts dealing with "Sufferings" of the Friends Religious Society. New York City (street address not given).

Revolutionary War archives. Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Connecticut.

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